

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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P R 171520Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 102
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LAGOS 10219

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE

REF: USUN 03193

1. SUMMARY. THE FMG IS VERY CONCERNED THAT THE UK
AND THE US HAVE NOT YET FOUND ANY PRACTICAL WAY TO
MOVE AHEAD WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANGLO-
AMERICAN PLAN AND IT WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOME APPROACH
ADOPTED WHICH APPEARED MORE PROMISING THAN THE REPEATED
CALLS FOR THE CONVENING OF AN ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE.
WE BELIEVE CONSIDERATION MIGHT BE GIVEN TO AN
ALTERNATIVE APPROACH WHICH WOULD INVOLVE GOING AHEAD
WITH A DECISIVE CONFERENCE ON RHODESIA, WHETHER OR
NOT THE SALISBURY GROUP DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE IN
IT, WHICH WOULD SEEK TO SPELL OUT DETAILS FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN DESIGNED
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TO INSURE NOT ONLY FAIR ELECTIONS BUT TO PROVIDE
PARITY OF INFLUENCE AND OPPORTUNITY BETWEEN THE
SALISBURY GROUP AND THE PF DURING THE TRANSITIONAL
PERIOD. END SUMMARY.

(A) NIGERIAN PERCEPTIONS

2. WHAT WE HEAR THESE DAYS FROM THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ON RHODESIA IS SIMPLY A WARNING THAT TIME IS RAPIDLY RUNNING OUT FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF ACHIEVING A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT AND THAT IT IS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL THAT THE UK AND US DO SOMETHING TO RESTORE MOVEMENT TOWARDS THIS OBJECTIVE. IF ANY SPECIFIC SUGGESTION IS MADE, IT IS USUALLY ONLY THE TRADITIONAL ONE THAT WE MUST GET RID OF SMITH. BOTH THE FMG'S CONCERN WITH THE PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS AND ITS INABILITY TO RECOMMEND A BETTER APPROACH WERE REFLECTED IN THE HEAD OF STATE'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER OF JULY 26.

3. OFFICIALS IN MEA NEVERTHELESS APPEAR TO BELIEVE THAT THE US AND THE UK ARE JUST RESTING ON THEIR OARS AND DRIFTING WITH THE TIDE AT THE PRESENT TIME WITH REGARD TO RHODESIA. AS MENTIONED IN LAGOS 9719, THEY WONDER WHETHER THIS IS A DELIBERATE POLICY WHICH RESTS ON THE HOPE THAT THE TIDE IN THIS CASE IS THAT OF THE SALISBURY GROUP'S INTERNAL SETTLEMENT.

(B) SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION AT AN ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE

4. RE PARA 3 OF REFTTEL, WE CAN SEE THAT IT MAY BE MORE DIFFICULT THAN EVER AT AN ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE TO OBTAIN THE AGREEMENT OF THE FRONTLINE AND THE PF
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TO ARRANGEMENTS WHICH IN FACT WOULD PROVIDE FOR PARITY DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD BETWEEN THE SALISBURY GROUP AND THE PF AND WOULD FACILITATE FAIR ELECTIONS. NEVERTHELESS, IT APPEARS TO US THAT THERE IS NO OTHER REASONABLE OBJECTIVE FOR THE US AND THE UK TO PURSUE AT SUCH A CONFERENCE AND THAT EVERY EFFORT WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE TO ACHIEVE THAT OBJECTIVE THROUGH AGREEMENT ON DETAILS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN.

(C) POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE

5. WE WONDER WHETHER THERE IS NOT ONE ALTERNATIVE APPROACH WHICH COULD BE PURSUED IN VIEW OF THE FAILURE OF EFFORTS THUS FAR TO PERSUADE THE SALISBURY GROUP TO PARTICIPATE IN AN ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE. WOULD IT BE DESIRABLE FOR THE UK TO CONVENE A CONFERENCE WITH THE MALTA PARTICIPANTS IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO NEGOTIATE IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL THE MANY AREAS OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN WHICH THE PF HAS NOT YET ACCEPTED OR WHICH REQUIRE FURTHER CLARIFICATION? IN SUCH A MEETING THE UK AND US WOULD THEMSELVES

ENDEAVOR TO INSURE THAT ANY AGREEMENT WHICH EMERGED FROM THE CONFERENCE NOT ONLY FACILITATED FAIR ELECTIONS BUT WOULD PROVIDE THE SALISBURY GROUP WITH INFLUENCE AND OPPORTUNITY EQUAL TO THAT OF THE PF DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. IF THIS COURSE WERE FOLLOWED, THE UK WOULD PUBLICLY ANNOUNCE THE PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE SOME TIME BEFORE ITS CONVENING AND MAKE CLEAR THAT, WHILE THE SALISBURY GROUP COULD PARTICIPATE IN THE CONFERENCE IF IT SO WISHED, THE CONFERENCE WOULD BEGIN ON THE SPECIFIED DATE IN ANY CASE.

NOTE BY OC/T: MESSAGE DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.
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6. THERE IS PERHAPS SOME POSSIBILITY THAT THE PURSUIT OF THIS COURSE OF ACTION, IN A SPIRIT OF CONFIDENCE THAT THE RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE WOULD IN FACT SHAPE THE EVENTUAL COURSE OF EVENTS IN RHODESIA,

WOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT IMPACT ON THE SALISBURY GROUP PARTICIPANTS, WHO MUST BY NOW HAVE GRAVE DOUBTS ABOUT THE VIABILITY OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, SO THAT THEY WOULD DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONFERENCE. THE UK AND THE US WOULD ENDEAVOR TO CONVINCE THEM THAT THIS CONFERENCE WAS TO BE THE CRUCIAL ONE AND THAT THE ARRANGEMENTS MADE REGARDING THEIR ROLE DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE MORE SATISFACTORY FROM THEIR STANDPOINT IF THEY TOOK PART IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

7. IN THE LIKELY EVENT THAT THE SALISBURY GROUP STILL DID NOT TAKE THE BAIT, THIS COURSE OF ACTION MIGHT STILL HAVE BENEFICIAL RESULTS PROVIDED THAT
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AGREEMENT WAS REACHED DURING THE CONFERENCE (OR SERIES OF CONFERENCES) ON CLARIFICATIONS AND DETAILS WHICH WOULD PLACE THE SALISBURY GROUP ON A POSITION OF PARITY WITH THE PF DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. SUCH A RESULT MIGHT BE REASSURING TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE SALISBURY GROUP WHO NOW FEAR THAT ANY ARRANGEMENTS WORKED OUT IN AN ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE WOULD NOT PROVIDE THEM WITH PARITY. FURTHERMORE AN AGREEMENT WHICH SEEMED LIKELY TO OFFER PARITY MIGHT APPEAR MORE ATTRACTIVE TO THEM IN A MONTH OR TWO THAN IT DOES AT THE PRESENT TIME IF THE SECURITY PROSPECTS IN RHODESIA CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE.

8. SHOULD THE SALISBURY GROUP NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE CONFERENCE AND ALSO DECIDE AT THE CONCLUSION OF A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN, THE US AND THE UK WOULD AT LEAST HAVE PROVIDED STRONG EVIDENCE OF THEIR DESIRE TO REJECT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO BRING ABOUT AN EQUITABLE SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA.

9. IF THE UK AND THE US SHOULD DECIDE THAT THE APPROACH DESCRIBED ABOVE WERE WORTH EXPLORING, THEY WOULD OF COURSE NEED TO APPROACH THE FRONT LINE STATES, MGERIA AND THE PF TO PERSUADE THEM OF THE ADVISABILITY OF HOLDING A CONFERENCE OF THIS TYPE.

10. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE MANY PROBLEMS IN RELATION TO THE ABOVE PROPOSAL WHICH WE HAVE NOT DISCUSSED BUT THINK THAT IT MIGHT NEVERTHELESS MERIT SOME CONSIDERATION.
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